

Message Text

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ACTION OES-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 INR-07

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FM USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6729

INFO USERDA GERMANTOWN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L IAEA VIENNA 9789

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, TECH, IAEA

SUBJECT: IAEA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN REPROCESSING

MEXICO FOR SCICOUNS

REF: A. STATE 9298; B. IAEA VIENNA 9719

SUMMARY. I MET WITH MEXICAN AMBASSADOR (SCHMILL) NOVEMBER 18, AND IN COURSE OF CORDIAL TWO-HOUR DISCUSSION OUTLINED OUR CONCERNS REGARDING TWO TA REQUESTS FOR EXPERTS TO ADVISE ON DESIGN AND SAFETY OF REPROCESSING PILOT PLANT IN MEXICO AND SUGGESTED COURSE HIS GOVERNMENT MIGHT CONSIDER AS ALTERNATIVES TO THOSE REQUESTS. SCHMILL WAS RECEPTIVE AND UNDERTOOK TO SEEK INSTRUCTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN CALL ON AMB. SCHMILL, TIMED TO PRECEDE MEETING OF LA CAUCUS SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 19, I OPENED DISCUSSION OF REPROCESSING REQUESTS WITH OBSERVATION THAT PRACTICALITY OF PLUTONIUM RECYCLE ITSELF IS AT PRESENT
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COMPLICATED AND DEBATABLE SUBJECT, WHICH, IN

TURN, RAIES QUESTIONS OF WHETHER, WHEN AND HOW REPROCESSING SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN. HOWEVER, IT WAS OUR VIEW, AS EXPRESSED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER SPEECH TO UNGA, THAT COUNTRIES SHOULD TAKE A HARD LOOK AT BENEFITS FOR THEM IN REGIONAL FUEL CYCLE CENTER APPROACH WHICH COULD PROVIDE MOST ECONOMICAL LONG-TERM STORAGE CAPABILITY, REPROCESSING FACILITY (WHEN AND IF ECONOMICALLY ATTRACTIVE), WASTE-HANDLING AND FUEL FABRICATION. UTILITY OF THESE CENTERS TO MANY COUNTRIES, NOT ONLY FROM ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW, BUT ALSO FROM STANDPOINT OF SAFEGUARDS IMPLEMENTATION AND PHYSICAL SECURITY, APPEARED VERY ATTRACTIVE AND CERTAINLY WORHY OF DETAILED STUDY.

2. OUR BELIEFS ON SUBJECT HAD BEEN BORNE OUT BY RESULTS OF PRELIMINARY STUDY INITIATED BY SECRETARIAT ON REGIONAL CENTERS WHICH WAS UNDERTAKEN WELL BEFORE USG EXPRESSED OFFICIAL INTEREST IN AGENCY ACTIVITY IN THIS FIELD. AGENCY WAS NOW ENGAGED IN DETAILED STUDY, WITH STRONG SUPPORT FROM USG AND OTHER MEMBER STATES, WHICH WE ANTICIPATED WOULD BE COMPLETED NOT LATER THAN EARLY 1977. IN OUR VIEW IT WOULD BE INCONSISTENT AND CONTRADICTORY FOR AGENCY TO USE ITS LIMITED RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY EXPERTS, FOR ASSISTANCE TO NATIONAL REPROCESSING PROGRAMS BEFORE OUTCOME OF PRESENT STUDY IS KNOWN. I ADDED THAT LARGE NUMBER OF OTHER MISSION REPS IN VIENNA SHARED THIS VIEW AND HAD EXPRESSED TO US HOPE THAT MEXICO WOULD FOLLOW ARGENTINA'S EXAMPLE AND DEFER ITS REQUESTS FOR TA PROJECTS CONCERNED.

3. SUGGESTION WHICH SEEMED TO HAVE TELLING IMPACT ON SCHMILL WAS THAT IF MEXICO NEVERTHELESS ALLOWED THESE REQUESTS STAND, APPROVAL BY TAC COULD WELL BE A PYRRHIC VICTORY: EXPERTISE IN REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY IS SCARCE AND USG, CONFIDENTIAL

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FOR ONE, INTENDS GIVE PRIORITY IN PROVISION OF EXPERTS IN THIS FIELD TO AGENCY STUDY. OTHER MEMBER STATES WITH EXPERIENCE IN REPROCESSING WOULD LIKELY TAKE SWMD POSITION. THUS, WITH NO EXPERTS AVAILABLE, REQUESTS WOULD NOT BE FULFILLED AND \$45,000 WORTH OF TA WOULD BE LOST TO MEXICO.

4. AS ALTERNATIVE TO THIS RISKY COURSE, I SUG-

GESTED MEXICO CONSIDER DROPPING THE TWO REQUESTS AND REQUEST THE AGENCY FOR TA FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING MEXICAN PERSONNEL TO VIENNA TO PARTICIPATE IN AGENCY STUDY, WHICH EXPERIENCE COULD BE OF SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT TO MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IN FORMULATING FUTURE POLICY AND PLANS IN THIS AREA ON WELL-INFORMED BASIS. IF DROPPING REQUESTS COMPLETELY WAS DIFFICULT, MEXICO COULD REARRANGE PRIORITY OF REQUESTS AS LISTED IN TA DOCUMENT (GOV/COM. 8/53/ADD 1), SWITCHING ITS TWO "FOOTNOTE A" REQUESTS (FOR NEUTRON PHYSICS AND NATURAL URANIUM REACTORS) WITH REPROCESSING REQUESTS FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR. FYI: SINCE PRESENTLY FOOTNOTED REQUESTS TOTAL \$36,000 AND REPROCESSING REQUESTS TOTAL \$45,000, ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE WORKED OUT IN SECRETARIAT TO USE BALANCE OF \$9,000 FOR EXPENSES INVOLVED IN BRINGING MEXIAN EXPERTS TO VIENNA. END FYI.

5. SCHMILL WAS ATTENTIVE AND RECEPTIVE THROUGHOUT AND AT MEETING'S CLOSE, THANKED US FOR TAKING HIM INTO OUR CONFIDENCE REGARDING OUR CONCERNS. HE SAID THAT AFTER DISCUSSING MATTER FURTHER WITH AGENCY TA STAFF, HE WOULD TELEPHONE ALBA ANDRADE FOR DECISION.

6. FOR MEXICO: AT HIS DISCRETION, SCICOUNS MAY WISH MAKE SIMILAR APPROACH TO ALBA ANDRADE, WITH VIEW TO EXPEDITE FAVORABLE REPLY TO SCHMILL, PRIOR TO TA COMMITTEE MEETING NOV. 27.

7. MISSION HAS JUST LEARNED THAT AT LA GROUP MEETING 11/19, MEXICAN REP INFORMED
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HER COLLEAGUES THAT GOM WAS CONSIDERING REARRANGING PRIORITIES OF ITS TA REQUESTS. LABOWITZ

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